1873MNRAS..33..189H

observation—the Greenwich or local time should be given with more or less accuracy, as well as the apparent clearness of atmosphere and state of the sky. If the result of a series of observations, some at least of the most remarkable should be selected, and the times, circumstances, and conditions of atmosphere when they were severally made, should be fully stated. If these particulars be generally noted and communicated, the value of such contributions will be greatly enhanced.

The Council, having duly considered that it would be for the interests of astronomy, and of the Society to distribute freely the Proceedings to non-members at a small charge, have resolved that in future the *Monthly Notices* may be obtained by application to the Assistant-Secretary, at the price of one shilling for each number, or ten shillings for the session, which in the latter instance includes the postage within the limits of the United Kingdom.

Government Aid to the Cultivation of the Physics of Astronomy.

After long and careful consideration of this subject, extending over four meetings, two of which were especially convened for the purpose, and including the discussion of points importantly affecting as well the interests of science as the dignity of this Society, your Council by a large majority passed the following resolutions on the 28th of June, 1872:—

1. That the President be authorised, on behalf of the Council and Fellows of the Royal Astronomical Society, to bring before the Royal Commissioners on Scientific Instruction and on the Advancement of Science now sitting, the importance of further aid being afforded to the cultivation of the Physics of Astronomy.

2. They think such aid would be most effectually given by increased assistance, where needed, to existing Public Observatories, in the direction recommended by the heads of those Observatories, especially that at the Cape of Good Hope, and by the establishment of a new Observatory on the Highlands of India, or in some other part of the British dominions where the climate is favourable for the use of large instruments.

3. The Council do not recommend the establishment of an independent Government Observatory for the cultivation of Astronomical Physics in England, especially as they have been informed that the Board of Visitors of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, at their recent meeting, recommended the taking of photographic and spectroscopic records of the Sun at that Observatory.

OBITUARY.

The deaths of the following Fellows and Associates have been reported to the Council since the last Anniversary,—

Honorary Member:—Mrs. Mary Somerville.

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1873MNRAS..33..215.

engaged in the labours of his office, believed that he had still many years to live. His death, however, took place three years afterwards; he passed away tranquilly and without suffering, on the 22nd of April, 1871, leaving six sons and two daughters to mourn his loss. His wife, with whom he had lived in happiness for many years, had preceded him so long ago as 1846.

To astronomers Schwerd is best known by his observations of circumpolar stars made in 1826, 1827, and 1828, at Speyer, a reduced catalogue of which was published by Oeltzen at Vienna, in 1856. The earlier numbers of the *Astronomische Nachrichten* also contain several observations made by him of occultations and comets, including Halley's Comet at its appearance in 1835. The small Observatory of the Lyceum, in which these observations were made, was built in 1823, and presented by King Maximilian Joseph with a 20-inch meridian-circle by Reichenbach and Ertel, which was first used in February, 1826. These, however, were by no means the whole of Schwerd's directly scientific labours. He made a valuable contribution to geodesy in the measurement of a base-line in the Palatinate, and comparing it by triangulation with the longer one measured under royal authority by Laemmle in 1819–20. He also distinguished himself in the field of optical inquiry, and in the year 1835 published a work on the "Analytical Development of the Phenomena of Diffraction derived from the Fundamental Principles of the Undulatory Theory of Light." It is only necessary to mention here one other of the many labours of Professor Schwerd,—the construction of a new kind of prism-photometer, about the same time that Sir John Herschel was using his astrometer at the Cape of Good Hope. With this instrument, which he contrived at Munich, Schwerd made many measures of the quantity of light given out by several of the brightest stars. He was elected an Associate of this Society in 1837.

W. T. L.

PROCEEDINGS OF OBSERVATORIES.

Royal Observatory, Greenwich.

The usual course of observations with the Altazimuth was interrupted in the latter part of the year by the dismounting of the instrument, in order that the pivots of its horizontal axis might be repaired. With the view of securing a better determination of the zero of azimuth, the practice was introduced in November 1871, of observing, when practicable, a low star instead of the collimator for combination with a high star; this soon revealed the existence of discordances in the zero of azimuth as determined from the high and the low objects, which could only arise from irregularity of the pivots of the horizontal axis. On examination these were found to be much cut, and the instrument was, in consequence, dismounted on 1872, September 20, so that the pivots might be re-turned, and new segmental bearings made

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